CHAPTER 30

Factors influencing growth

We see a tremendous potential in the growing markets of Russia and other countries in this region.

Dave Senay, Fleishman-Hillard president and chief executive officer

It’s clear that the growing demand for Public Relations (PR) will ensure that the PR industry continues to grow in most parts of the New Europe as PR becomes axiomatic for any sizeable organization. PR is no longer just an exotic import, but is growing naturally. However, developing a new business discipline imposes its own demands. We have outlined some below.

In 2007 WPP, the marketing services group which owns large PR consultancies such as Burson-Marsteller, Hill & Knowlton, Ogilvy and Finsbury, reported revenue growth rates of 6 percent for Europe as a whole, but almost 19 percent for Central and Eastern Europe.

Source: PR Week

Training

A young, rapidly growing industry needs a trained workforce. That means more short courses, which current employees can undertake to sharpen up particular skills, and more formal courses, offered by
universities and colleges, leading to PR qualifications. This process can be swift: in the United Kingdom there were no university courses in PR 20 years ago and now there are dozens, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

**Recruitment**

The great surge in recruitment into PR will continue across the region: the industry has a long way to go before it matures. According to the 2007 Holmes Report, PR firms in the region – in common with PR firms around the world – see recruitment as the biggest obstacle to growth.

At present the profile of PR people is often very young, and what is gained in energy and enthusiasm is lost in terms of experience and perceived seniority. Although PR will probably remain a relatively youthful sector, we predict the following:

- A gradual ageing of the industry as early recruits mature;
- Ever higher standards of recruit, as the industry becomes better known and more popular, and people throng to enter it;
- More mid-career recruits from related fields, especially journalism and, in the public affairs field, from politics;
- Increased recruitment of people with PR qualifications who will thus have a head start in their careers.

From a Western perspective it is extremely surprising that a major – and high-profile – business such as the Russian energy giant Gazprom, which operates in 40 countries, was employing only three senior communications professionals as recently as 2007.

*Source: PR Week*

**Trade bodies**

Trade bodies for the PR industry already exist in many countries in the region, but are still at a relatively early stage of development. They can play an important part in bringing together representatives from an industry which is otherwise very dispersed, scattered...